

## NOMBASHINI ka NDHLELA

25.10.1907

File 62, nbk. 87, pp. 14-18.

14 Nombashini is of about the age of the Dududu regiment, for he was born when the Boers fought the English in Durban in 1843.<sup>1</sup> He is of the amaNcwabeni tribe, who are abeNguni.<sup>2</sup> His father was of the uTshwele regiment.<sup>3</sup> I fancy this was a Zulu regiment - it may <sic>

Our people formerly lived at the eNyamvubu, a small stream at the eMpafane (Mooi River), on the river, between it and the Estcourt river, and near where the railway line runs. When Tshaka attacked Macingwane, our people, hearing of *the*  
15 *fame of Sikiti*, a name by which the Zulus were known, left, and fled to Matatiyele in the Cape Colony.<sup>4</sup> Some later on returned, and built at the eMkuzana stream (enters the Umlazi).<sup>5</sup> On settling here they were *driven out (citwa'd)* by the Boers. They then went to live at the Pasiwe mountain.<sup>6</sup> They were *amahobo*; they hunted game, having no property.<sup>7</sup> Wherever a buffalo was killed, there became their home; where an elephant or a hippopotamus was killed, there they established a home. After a time, the country being quiet, they came to Pietermaritzburg and passed on to occupy land at eNgomankulu hill, in the vicinity of Manderston Railway Station.<sup>8</sup>

My father was born south of the Umzimvubu (St. John's) *in the Nguni country (ebuNguni)*.<sup>9</sup>

*Our inkaba is in the Nguni country, in the Xosa country.*<sup>10</sup> That is where we really belong to. That is where my father was born before Tshaka began to reign.

The uTshwele regiment to which my father belonged, may have been one of the Xosa king's regiments.

My father was Ndhlela by name, but on going *to the Zulu country* he was ordered  
16 not to use that name, so he was given the name of Mtakati. This name was forbidden because it was that of the big *induna*, Ndhlela.<sup>11</sup>

At the Nyamvubu, where, as I say, we formerly lived, there are many stone cattle kraals that used to be occupied by us.

My ancestors, prior to Tshaka's reign, came from the Xosas south of the St. John's river, and settled at the eNyamvubu [see above], whilst another branch of the Ncwabeni clan went to live at Pasiwe mountain, and there took on the name of Cakwe, from one of their chiefs.

Our chiefs are Bavulana (living) ka Deyi ka Mdungi ka Vazi ka Saba ka Zana ka

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Ncwabe ka Mdematoleni ka Nzima ka Bawoshana. Cakwe was son of Mfupinkomeni ka Nzima ka Bawoshana.

Cakwe had a son Mtshengu, who had a son Tingise, who had a son Mabengu, who had a son Vapi, who had no sons, only girls, but his brother bore Buqa, who had a son Saliwane who had a son Bokwe (and Marwaqa). These two *disputed the succession (banga 'd)*, which was decided in favour of Bokwe. Both are living.

17 Bavulana lives near Manderston. He has been deposed from the chieftainship for debt - always being imprisoned. Gingqika has been set up in his place.

Mdungu was buried at the eNyamvubu; those before him were buried beyond the St. John's. I do not know where Vazi and Saba were buried; I fancy they were buried in the Cape Colony. It is possible that Vazi was buried at the eNyamvubu, because the stay of our people there was a long one.

Cakwe and Nzima were also buried *in the Nguni country*, in the Cape Colony. I was born *at the source of the Mkuzane* (which enters the Umlazi).

The ground which Pietermaritzburg is on was built on by Macibise (a woman) ka Mlifa (Mlitwa). I do not remember the name of the tribe.<sup>12</sup> Macibise died where Edendale now stands. That is where she lived. Macibise's descendants are to be found *near the Xolo* tribe, near the Umzimkulu (Harding district).

The Nyamvu and Amabaca (Madikane: chief), formerly lived close to Bishopstowe.<sup>13</sup> These two tribes *were neighbours of* Macibise.

18 My father was Ndhlela (Mtakati) ka Novelezansi ka Mengezela ka Ndhrazi ka Zana ka Ncwabe ka Mdematoleni ka Nzima ka Bawoshana. Of these, Novelezansi and Ndhrazi were buried at the Nyamvubu. I feel sure Ndhrazi was buried there.

26.10.1907

File 62, nbk. 87, pp. 18-19.

When children are *hushed* in our tribe, we say, '*Hush, Makatini; hush, Ncwabe; hush, Nzima, hush, Bawoshana.*' Makatini is used because we came between or among the chiefs.<sup>14</sup> This came about in the following way. Nzima had two sons, Mfupinkomeni and Mdematoleni, the latter *following in age after* the former. Mfupinkomeni was the son and heir, and in time succeeded his father as chief. When he had done so, he got into the habit of slaughtering a lot of cattle for his people, and then going out with some boys to hunt birds with *knobsticks* before the cattle had been skinned, cut up and distributed. Mdematoleni always remained behind and took over the duty of attending to the people in the absence of the chief. He distributed the meat, and was generally hospitable and sociable with the people. Anyone coming up would be informed that the chief was away, but would find for himself that Mdematoleni, a younger brother, was in charge. Incidents such as these were of  
19 frequent occurrence. In the course of time, a large portion of the tribe attached themselves to Mdematoleni. He then separated from his brother and lived on land of his own. Owing to his close relationship to the principal chief, and especially to his so frequently acting as chief in the absence of his brother, he was recognized as being actually among the chiefs, i.e. one of them, hence the *praise-name (isibongo)*

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Makatini, which means between or among.

The two words Mfupinkomeni and Mdematoleni, as of two brothers, are peculiar. They are not mere *praise-names*.<sup>15</sup>

My father told me that his father and grandfather had *headrings*. This is an *umdabu omdala* (ancient custom). The ring was put on so that a man would be dignified, well-behaved, earnest. A young man who has an *isihlutu* is always fiddling about with it, scratching his head whilst talking, and so forth.<sup>16</sup>

Gingqika ka Mcopela (deceased - was Bavulana's son and heir) is acting chief in lieu of Bavulana, Umgeni Division.<sup>17</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The uDududu was one of Mpande's *amabutho*. The fighting referred to took place between Boers of the Republic of Natalia and a British force which occupied Natal in 1842.

<sup>2</sup>For discussion of the term Nguni see Wright, 'Politics, ideology and the invention of the "Nguni" '.

<sup>3</sup>We have been unable to identify the uTshwele 'regiment'. Further on in his evidence, Nombashini suggests that it may have been formed among the Xhosa.

<sup>4</sup>Macingwane was chief of the Chunu. 'Sikithi' (Sikidi) features in some of Shaka's praises as one of his own praise-names.

<sup>5</sup>The Mlazi river rises south-west of Pietermaritzburg and enters the sea on the southern outskirts of Durban.

<sup>6</sup>The uPhasiwe or Blinkwater range lies some forty kilometres north of Pietermaritzburg.

<sup>7</sup>Bryant gives *ihobo* (pl. *amahobo*) as the equivalent of *ihobe*, which he glosses as 'Man destitute of cattle' (*Dictionary*, p. 264).

<sup>8</sup>Manderston station is fifteen kilometres south-east of Pietermaritzburg. Ngomankulu hill is five kilometres further to the south-east.

<sup>9</sup>'Nguni' here refers to the Xhosa people.

<sup>10</sup>*Inkaba* literally means navel. Bryant, *Dictionary*, p. 285, indicates that when used in certain phrases it refers to relations of kinship.

<sup>11</sup>Ndlela kaSompisi was one of Dingane's principal *izinduna*.

<sup>12</sup>Machibise, who is variously given in recorded traditions as belonging to the amaNqondo, amaZizi, and abakwaZondi peoples, lived in the early years of the nineteenth century.

<sup>13</sup>Madikane (Madzikane) was chief of the Bhaca in the early nineteenth century. Bishopstowe lies ten kilometres to the north-east of Pietermaritzburg.

<sup>14</sup>The name Makatini (Makhathini) appears to derive from the noun *umkhathi*, which Bryant, *Dictionary*, p. 297, gives as 'Space intervening between any two things...'

<sup>15</sup>Mfuphinkomeni literally means 'the short person among the cattle', while Mdematholeni literally means 'the tall person among the yearlings'.

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<sup>16</sup>Bryant, Dictionary, p. 261, gives *isihlutu (isihluthu)* as 'Hair of a young man or girl when grown in a long thick mass'.

<sup>17</sup>In the original this sentence occurs as an insertion in the top margin of p.19.